DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 094 PS 007 155

AUTHOR	Peters, Donald L.; Sibbison, Virginia
TITLE	Considerations in the Assessment of Day Care Needs. Center for Human Service Development Report No. 12.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania State Univ., University Park. Coll. of Human Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Pennsylvania State Dept. of Public Welfare, Harrisburg.
REPORT NO	PSU-CHSD-R-12
PUB DATE	Jun 72
NOTE	44p.; For other reports in this series, see PS 007 154-164
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Changing Attitudes; *Community Attitudes; *Community Characteristics; *Community Services; *Day Care Services; Decision Making; Educational Needs; Evaluation Criteria; Facility Case Studies; Guidelines; *Needs

ABSTRACT

This report highlights problem areas and suggests methodological guidelines to be considered in the assessment of community day care needs. The report is organized around three definitive areas of assessment: the number of potential users, consumer demand, and community needs. Each of the three sections is concluded with generalized content questions. The appendix is a case example illustrating how assessment information may be used in the planning and decision-making processes. A question-and-answer format is used, followed by summarizing remarks. (Author/CS)

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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ASSESSMENT OF DAY CARE NEEDS

BY DONALD L. PETERS AND VIRGINIA SIBBISON

JUNE 1972

CHSD Report No. 12

PS 007153

COLLEGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
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CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ASSESSMENT OF DAY CARE NEEDS[1]

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INTRODUCTION

With increased interest in and federal and state support for the development of day care services throughout the United States, many communities have begun to plan for community day care services. Where such planning is attempted in some systematic fashion, the effort usually begins with an "assessment of needs."

While assessing needs is clearly a logical starting point, there are a number of pitfalls evident in the manner in which it is usually carried out. Although some methodological guidelines exist (Zamoff & Vogt, 1971), the intent of this report is to highlight some of the problem areas and suggest some additional considerations to be incorporated into future efforts.

It is critical to the understanding of this report, and to the understanding of planning for day care services, that a clear and definitive distinction be made between the terms "potential users," "consumer demand,"

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[1]This report was prepared under contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. The opinions and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the sponsoring agency.

and "community neediness." Confusion of these concepts can easily lead to erroneous assumptions and predictions about the usefulness of day care for any particular community. "Potential users" refers only to those individuals who are eligible for service use, i.e., those individuals with children under six who live in a defined area; it is a number usually arrived at on the basis of knowledge of (or prediction of) demographic variables such as population size and distribution. This concept of potential users is frequently utilized as the sole basis for planning day care services, with little awareness of the role of "consumer demand." The "demand" factor refers to the acknowledged need for services expressed by a community. For example, a community may contain a large number of potential users of day care services; however, until the demand for day care is determined (including the attitudes in the community toward day care, the working or nonworking status of mothers, the economic basis of the community, etc.), one cannot have an accurate assessment of what percentage of the potential users would in fact utilize day care services should they become available. The third term requiring definition is "community neediness," which in this report refers to the objective and systematic determination by an expert group or agency of the state of "health" of the community and the type of social services required by the community. Analysis of the first two and consideration of the third are required before the day care needs may be accurately assessed.

The report is organized around these three areas of assessment; assessing the number of potential users, assessing consumer demand, and assessing community neediness. In each case generalized content questions are suggested.

In the Appendix to this report a case example is included which illustrates some of the pertinent content areas. This example is utilized to demonstrate some of the concerns of assessment and the ways in which the information acquired may be used to develop plans for day care services.

POTENTIAL USERS

Most national and local day care assessments of need have been based upon population estimates from recent census data. Several recent reports (Westinghouse-Westat, 1970; Lazar & Rosenberg, 1971) suggest a large number of potential users of day care services. Lazar & Rosenberg (1971) point out that in 1970 there were approximately 55 million children under the age of 14 living in the United States. They also state:

> It has become obvious that the estimated 46,300 licensed or approved Day Care or Family Day Care centers in the United States, able to serve but 638,000 children, are woefully inadequate to the need. There are millions of children of very poor families, children of working mothers -- and handicapped children who may benefit significantly from appropriate Day Care services. (p. 63)

The Westinghouse-Westat report provides additional examples. It estimates that there are 12,300,000 children under 14 years of age in the United States whose mothers are employed. Over 3.8[2] million of these children are under 6 years of age. Only 1.3 million of these children are served by full-day day care centers and family day care homes. Similarly, of the approximately 8.5 million children between the ages of 6 and 14 years, only 233,000 are served by before-and/or after-school day care facilities.

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[2] Based upon 1965 population estimates.

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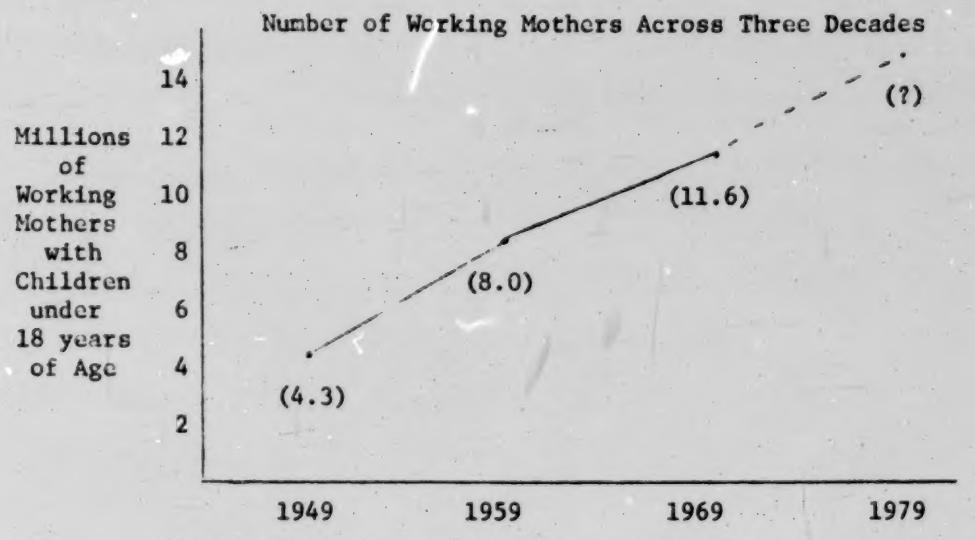
Estimates indicate that there are approximately 12 million working mothers with children under the age of 18 years (the highest number ever recorded), and the number continues to climb (see Figure 1). These mothers constitute approximately 41 per cent of the total female working force.[3]

Figure 1

Number of Working Mothers Across Three Decades



Population Trends

Population statistics and projected population statistics similar to those cited above can be, and have been, compiled for states and local communities. Such figures clearly provide useful information. However, they may not reflect "consumer demand," and hence they probably do not accurately reflect day care needs. They reflect only crudely the number of potential users. To gain more accurate estimates of the number of potential users closer scrutiny must be given to population trends.

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[3] U. S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Special Labor Force Reports (Profiles on Children).

1960 and 1970 census data show a decrease in the number of preschool children generally. Projections for 1980 indicate no appreciable overall population (Profiles on Children, 1970).

Secondly, the trend in family size or number of children per family within the population of concern is important. Recent studies indicate marked changes in the attitudes of young people between the ages of 18-30 years in the ideal number of children. For example, one study indicated the ideal number of children desired was 2.31, as compared to the figure of 3.0 to 3.3 which was consistently the finding of the studies of 20 and 30 years ago (Buckhout, 1972). Additionally, there is some evidence that the attitudes represented are changing rapidly in the direction of fewer children per family. The same study reports that the probability of using some form of artificial contraception is high and that its use is generally increasing within the population.

Such attitudes will vary from community to community depending upon religion, ethnic background, economic conditions, and the confounding variable of education. Because of this variation there will be differential expansion and contraction of the population to be served by day care across communities. In those communities where there is greatest acceptance and use of birth control and family planning information, there is likely to be the fewest potential users of day care services in the future. This statement is true despite the fact that both family planning and day care services are likely to evolve simultaneously in many communities.

Thirdly, the trends of inward and outward migration for the area must be analyzed. Does the population of potential users constitute a relatively stable component of the community? In some communities the population

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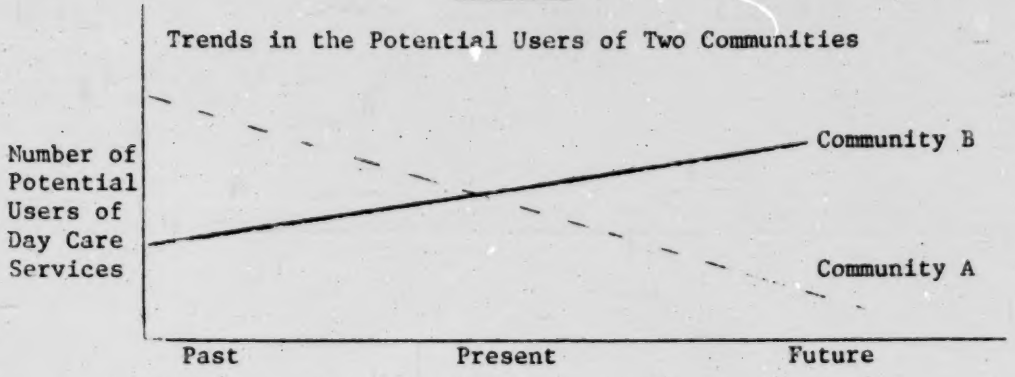
is relatively stable. The same residents stay for long periods of time. Children grow up and settle in the same area. In other communities the population is quite unstable. Instability brings changes in population characteristics and hence in the number of potential users. In some communities the mean age of the residents goes up with each succeeding year. The young adults tend to leave the community, and there are fewer children. Other communities have experienced a rapid influx of young married couples, and hence there has been a marked increase in the number of young children that may be served. Such changes may be documented and services planned accordingly.

Figure 2



Community A = outward migration of young people and/or decreasing birth rate

Community B = inward migration of young people and/or increasing birth rate

Economic Trends

It may seem obvious that the economic status of a community is a partial determiner of the number of potential users of day care services.

Clearly, where federally subsidized day care programs are provided, there are eligibility requirements for who may be served. Similarly, where proprietary day care services are provided, families must have some minimal income level before they could support such programs. Even where sliding fees may be arranged, there must be a sufficient number of users who can pay if budgeted costs are to be met.

The economic trends within a community will determine the number of families who are potential users of day care services of various types. Changes in the economic base of the community will occur from time to time. Where possible these should be predicted in advance so that both present and future numbers of users may be determined and plans adjusted accordingly.

Questions

The preceeding discussions suggest that population statistics should not be used crudely in the determination of estimates of potential day care service users. Refinements which will facilitate more adequate planning are attained by considering the following questions:

1. What is the trend in the number of children in the particular age group of concern?
2. What is the trend in the number of working mothers in the particular community?
3. What is the trend in the number of children within the age group who have working mothers in the community?
4. What effect is family planning and birth control information and use having on the population to be served by day care?
5. What are the trends of inward and outward migration for the area to be served?

6. What is the general economic status of the community?

7. What economic trends may be predicted for the community?

For each of these questions an answer should be sought from two time prospectives -- the present situation and some future date. That is, not only should the present condition or trend be assessed but all indicators which would suggest that things will change significantly in the foreseeable future should be considered.

CONSUMER DEMAND

To move from estimates of potential users to the clearer specification of "demands" for day care services, further consideration must be given to the characteristics of potential users. The specific characteristics of potential users that are of concern fall into three groups. They may be labeled awareness, attitudes, and recognition of specialized needs.

Awareness

Unless potential users recognize their own needs, they are unlikely to "demand" or use services, regardless of the intensity of those needs. The Westinghouse figures indicate, for example, that in families with incomes under $8,000 a year and with children under 9 years of age working mothers generally make informal arrangements for the care of their children. Within this group approximately 2.2 million children are cared for in their own home by relatives or friends. Another 580,000 are cared for by relatives outside the child's own home. Another, 130,000 are watched by the mother herself while she is at work.

Such arrangements obviously are not necessarily bad by any standard. When day care centers and family day care homes are construed as providing only baby sitting arrangements, it is reasonable to assume that the informal arrangements made by mothers may be both less expensive and more appropriate since, for the most part, they are keeping the child within an extended family arrangement. The tendency to keep the children in a more informal care arrangement, however, greatly reduces the number of potential users who will seek to utilize a more formalized day care service.

Additional impetus for the continued use of the more traditional forms of child care (relatives, babysitters in the home, etc.) is the lack of public awareness of the advantages and benefits of quality day care for the growth potential of the child. Rather, unfortunately, there has been more of an awareness of the occasional "horror story" of insensitive mass day care. These factors have contributed to the mother's attitude toward day care service as a viable alternative to informal arrangements.

Many mothers have acknowledged their need for child day care services but have made arrangements for their children in unlicensed, unapproved day care facilities. They may not be aware of the illegality of the situation nor of the fact that there is a better alternative.

In all cases, demand will be a function of the degree to which potential users know what quality day care is and what they perceive to be the alternative benefits and advantages of the other arrangements available to them.

Another concern is whether potential users are aware of possible subsidies for the use of state and federally supported facilities. Demand for formal day care services depends upon the cost of these services as

compared to the costs for informal arrangements. The demand will be affected by the amount of subsidy provided. The Westinghouse survey makes the point:

> Findings of the survey indicate there is a sizeable potential demand among low to moderate income working mothers for better day care center capacity. This category of working mothers would like to improve present child care arrangements but would require subsidies to afford better care.

The question, "If eligible, are potential users aware of state and federal subsidies for day care?", therefore, becomes a major concern in assessing demand.

Attitudes

Mothers enter the labor force for a variety of reasons. The most usual and compelling reason has to do with the family economic status. Of the mothers with children under 6 years of age whose family income was less than $10,000 per year, 33 percent work. When the family income exceeds $10,000, only 18 percent of the women with children under 6 years are employed. In fatherless families, the mother's income is essential, and these women constitute the largest portion of working mothers (Lazar & Rosenberg, 1971). These figures suggest that generally women will not seek employment if the family economic status is sufficiently sound to allow them to remain at home.

Maya Pines (1971) points out that before day care programs can be expanded, or even begun, the attitude of the public must be changed. She suggests that there is a general reluctance to interfere in what is generally regarded as a family responsibility, a desire to prevent mothers from working, and "a sense of guilt" which weighs heavily on all

concerned. Generalized attitudes exist within our society which suggest that a woman's place is in the home, that a good mother brings up her children and doesn't relegate them to the care of others, and so forth (White House Conference on Children, 1970; Pines, 1966; Rudeman, 1965; Stolz, 1963). By the same token within some subgroups of society there is on the part of men, a marked resistance to any system which would provide new or unusual freedom for women--for example, freedom to leave the home and the care of children. These attitudes are deeply ingrained and influence the demand for many social services.

However, a positive attitude towards maternal employment is not in itself a direct determiner of the demand for child care. Two more fundamental factors must be considered. The first is the availability of profitable and desirable employment opportunities. The second is the possession of appropriate employment skills. These factors will vary from community to community and from time to time. Where either or both factors are missing, the future numbers of working mothers who will demand day care services will be less. Only where profitable and desirable employment for mothers is a real possibility will there be pressure towards securing all the services required to allow such employment.

Where state or local subsidies are provided or where day care is part of a larger social service program, attitudes towards the "welfare system" also come into play. People do not demand services which are held in low esteem in their community.

Attitudes of a more specific nature may also affect the use of services. Bettye Caldwell (1967) has suggested some of these under the general question, "What is the optimal learning environment for the young child?" In

her well-documented paper she considers the research evidence relevant to seven questions:

1. Do intermittent, short-term separations of the child from the mother impair the mother-child relationship or the development of the child?
2. Is group upbringing invariably damaging?
3. Is healthy socio-emotional development the most important task of the first three years?
4. Do attempts to foster cognitive growth interfere with social and emotional development?
5. Do cognitive experiences of the first few years leave no significant residuals?
6. Can one expect that, without formal planning, all the necessary learning experiences will occur?
7. Are most homes and most parents adequate for at least the first three years?

She builds a strong case for a "no" answer to each of these questions. However, potential day care users who feel that the opposite is true will be much less likely to seek out day care for their child and will view it as only a last resort when economic or other factors leave no alternatives. Two other basic questions, then, are "What are the potential users' attitudes towards early educational experiences" and "What is the role of the family in providing such experiences?"

It should be noted, before leaving the area of attitudes, that the father's attitudes on these issues may be as influential, or even more influential, in decision-making than the mother's.

Recognition of Specialized Needs

As Lazar and Rosenberg (1971) point out, there are a large number of children with mental, emotional, or physical handicaps who are not receiving the specialized services they and their families need. Additionally, there are a variety of life circumstances that may make day care imperative for a child. These include the death of a parent, crisis situations within the

family, emotional disturbances, and so forth. The needs of these children for day care, and for additional services, are generally readily recognized and may create unique demands within a community. That is, the mother of a handicapped child may more readily recognize her own inability to meet her child's needs. Such parents may provide one of the most articulate and compelling statements of "demand." However, this type of demand may not adequately reflect the total day care need or even its priorities even though it suggests one area of concern.

Questions

Again these discussions suggest a series of questions, the answers to which will help in making more accurate determinations of potential users of day care services.

1. Are potential users aware of what quality day care is and what it is not?
2. If eligible, are potential users aware of state and federal subsidies for day care?
3. What attitudes exist within the population of potential users which could affect the utilization of day care services?
4. What attitudes towards early educational experiences are held by the potential users?
5. What specialized needs are expressed by the community?
6. Do the demands of persons with specialized needs reflect a common concern or a set of problems unique to a subgroup of potential users?

COMMUNITY NEEDINESS

The term "neediness," as it is used in this report, reflects a judgment made by some objective authority or agency. It is also an assessment which is at least partially independent of consumer demand.

Utilizing only the number of potential users when estimating the "need" for day care services in a community is likely to lead to an overestimate Using consumer demand alone is likely to lead to an underestimate. The former neglects too many of the characteristics of the human beings involved, and the latter underestimates, to some degree, the potential for individuals and circumstances to change. Neither method provides much room for professional judgment.

Professional judgment, based upon the correlated findings of major fields of research which offer insights into factors which affect child, family, and community development, adds a necessary third dimension to the assessment of the need for day care services. Those involved in the assessment must be capable of synthesizing research and analyzing the synthesis for those variables which are related to the desired social outcomes on the part of the expert body, a specification of relevant variables by the body, and a determination of the present status of these variables in the community of concern.

Assessing community neediness involves gathering and judging information at several major levels. At least four levels should be considered. These include: generalized community needs, specific community needs, quantity of community services, and types of community services.

Generalized Community Needs

A variety of demographic variables may be used to predict generalized community need. For example, communities with low income levels, low educational levels, high divorce rates, large numbers of one-parent families, high infant mortality rates, high incidence of children with environmentally

induced mental retardation, high rates of high school dropouts, and/or high incidences of disease or malnutrition may be considered communities needing some form of social intervention. It seems reasonable to class these communities as in need, even though the individuals within the communities may not be verbalizing a demand for the necessary intervention and supportive elements which are required in order to restore the community to "health."

Any one indicator alone may not be sufficient to adequately predict community neediness. For example, low income level is not a sufficient predictor since it is a characteristic of both low education, high-risk communities and of communities of postgraduate students near universities.

In general, what is required is some assessment of: 1) the quality of family life, including the learning and emotional environments provided for the child, and 2) the community context, the role it plays in determining family life, and its impact upon the developmental environment of the child.

Specific Community Needs

While demographic variables may be used to predict generalized community needs, relatively detailed, specific information about the community may be needed to determine specialized needs. An example will best illustrate the point.

It is generally conceded that the nutritional intake of young children will affect both their physical and intellectual growth and development, their success in school, and, for females, their potential for successful childbearing. Numerous studies have been conducted on the dietary intake of preschool children, and recommended dietary allowances have been established. Analysis of the nutritional intake of a sample of potential-user

children may be used to determine whether there is a "need" for programs to supplement the diets of children. If so, it would provide one justification for day care programs which provide meals and other nutritional supplements, while ruling out some other programs which do not fulfill this need. Similarly, the assessment might suggest the need for a nutrition education program as part of a "parent involvement" component of day care.

Quantity of Community Services

Concerns in the assessment of the quantity of community services are multiple. Included should be: 1) the quantity and quality of existing arrangements for the care of children, 2) the relationship of day care to other services already in existence, 3) the present rate of the utilization of services, and 4) the availability of community resources to be used in furnishing services.

After attaining an adjusted estimate of potential users, an appropriate starting point in the assessment of the quantity of services to be provided would be the evaluation of existing informal child care arrangements in the community. One might ask the general question, "Is the quantity of existing arrangements adequate, even if they are of uncertain quality?" If the quantity is sufficient, it may be undesirable to add new services. New services may be ill used, may disrupt the existing community social structure, or may create unwanted unemployment problems for present care providers. If the quantity is sufficient, it may be more desirable to formalize (bring under professional supervision or legislation) and upgrade, through training or technical assistance, existing services than to create new ones.

A second consideration is the relationship of the day care services to other formal services already being provided in the community. Interestingly enough, because of the variety of federal and other funding sources available to some target communities, some areas have run out of poor people's children. Too many redundant, or partially redundant (or even interfering) services are made available. The provision of each has usually been based upon the same "potential user' statistics.

Where other services are available, whether they are being fully utilized must be determined. If not, why not? Poor utilization of existing services may result from many factors, some of which reflect upon the services being provided (or how they are explained) and others upon the attitudes and needs of the clientele. Some services are ill used simply because people do not know of their existence. Others, because they are inaccessable due to a lack of transportation. Both situations are easily and economically remedied, and the remedies may present a better alternative than the establishment of new services.

The appraisal of the quantity of services to be provided should not ignore the capability of the community to provide the resources that are needed. All factors may indicate that there are a sufficient number of potential users, a large and legitimate demand, and a clear need for a wide network of quality day care services. However, the delivery of such services may require financial, physical, and personnel resources which are beyond reach. Where federal financial support is sought for the undertaking, locally raised matching monies are usually necessary. It is quite legitimate to ask whether the community is capable of raising such funds. Even should such funds be available, are there adequate local physical facilities

to house programs? Public facilities may be nonexistent or already overused. Finally, quality day care requires qualified personnel. Is there a sufficient reserve of such persons in the community, or would it be necessary to seek outsiders? If "strangers" were brought in to run the program, what would the effect be on the utilization of the program? If insufficient local staffing existed, are resources and delivery systems available to train new people? Each of these questions will determine whether a complete delivery of services is possible or whether plans should be modified to include, at least for the present, only those which could be staffed, housed, and financed.

Types of Community Service

Before firm plans are made, the question needs to be asked of whether day care is what is needed, or would some alternative type of service better meet both the expressed demands and the perceived needs of the community. Certain kinds of services receive particular attention from time to time. A "bandwagon" effect takes place which encourages communities to rush into the provision of one type of service to the neglect of others. This occurs even when the "service-of-the-month" does not really meet the needs of the community. Easy availability of funds may provide an added inducement. Care must be taken to insure that new services do not do a disservice to the community.

Even where all indicators point to day care as the appropriate service to be provided, thought should be given to the type of day care to be provided. For example, given a particular set of needs and demands, would it be better to provide two centers housing 60 children each or 20 family day

care homes with six children each. Additional consideration must be given to the potential provision of full-time vs. part-time care, the maintenance of facilities for night-time and weekend use, and the possible provision of care over extensive periods of time (as in cases of emergency within the home)..

Generally, the types of services provided should derive from the community neediness and demands. They should not be superimposed for convenience or because of the ready availability of resources.

Questions

1. Do relevant indicators suggest a generalized need for day care services in the community?
2. Are there specialized needs in the community which should be considered?
3. What is the quality and quantity of existing informal arrangements for the care of children?
4. What is the present rate of the utilization of formal services?
5. What are the causes of less than 100 percent utilization of existing services?
6. Are community resources (financial, physical, and human) sufficient to deliver needed services?
7. What specific services are needed?
8. Would day care meet the need?
9. What kind of day care services best meet the demands and needs of the community?

SUMMARY

The assertion made in this paper is that the assessment and projection of the day care services required by a particular community is a complex matter. It has been suggested that too often the needs of a community have been estimated solely on the basis of population statistics, with little or no awareness of the subtleties of those statistics in terms of cross-referencing for trends. Nor has there been enough attention paid to the potential users' demands. By "demands" we have indicated that a wide variety of variables, including economic conditions, community and individual attitudes, etc., will affect the potential use of available day care facilities. We have further suggested that the objective use of the available demographic data must be accurately tempered with awareness of community conditions in order to determine and plan most efficiently to meet the day care needs of the community.

To aid in the process of arriving at an accurate assessment of the critical areas of the assessment of the need for child care, we have provided a variety of questions which can be utilized in determining an individual community's present situation and potential condition in terms of day care services for its children.

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APPENDIX A

A Case Example of Community Day Care Assessment

Introduction

The Turnpike District of Pennsylvania lies in the mountain and valley province of the south central portion of the State, with the southern boundary being the border between Pennsylvania and the states of Maryland and West Virginia. Six counties in two tiers comprise the district. The northern counties east to west, are Huntingdon, Blair, and Cambria. The southern counties are Fulton, Bedford, and Somerset. Altoona is the largest city of the district. Much of the region is rural.

The six counties of the district are in the process of planning and developing a district-wide child development plan. During the summer of 1971 the district initiated a survey (funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission; Ritti & Sibbison, 1971) to assess the needs of the district with relation to child care and other services. Some of the results from that study, and information gathered from other sources, are used here to illustrate some of the considerations suggested in the body of this report.

Neither the questions used, nor the type of analysis conducted are presented as "ideals." Rather, the point is to suggest one type of procedure which can produce information necessary for planning. In particular, the information is organized around the broad topics of potential users, consumer demand, community neediness, and the resulting day care needs. Information relevant to all of the questions suggested in the body of the report was not available. Where such information is missing the questions were omitted. The original numbers of the questions were however

in order to be consistent with the report.

The data of the Turnpike District survey was collected and analyzed from 600 residents through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The participants were all women, mothers of children age six years or less. Efforts were made to obtain a broad range of respondents, crossing residential, economic, religious, educational, and racial categories. Additionally, we sampled across marital and employment status. The only two criteria required of all the mothers were Pennsylvania residence and the presence of at least one child six years of age or less in the home.

Potential Users

Question 1. What is the trend in the number of children in the particular age group of concern?

Several indicators are suggestive of the answer to this question. First of all, general Pennsylvania population predictions indicate a 2 percent decrease in the proportion of the population below 18 years of age by 1980. These predictions reflect a generalized change in the birth rate. Figure 1A indicates the statewide trends in birth, marriage, and divorce rates per 1,000 population for the period 1957 to 1968. It shows that the number of births has been diminishing steadily despite a rise in the number of marriages and a relatively unchanged number of divorces.

Table 1A reflects the change in birth rates for the 6 county Turnpike District. Three of the counties declined in birth rate and only one rose by more than one-tenth.

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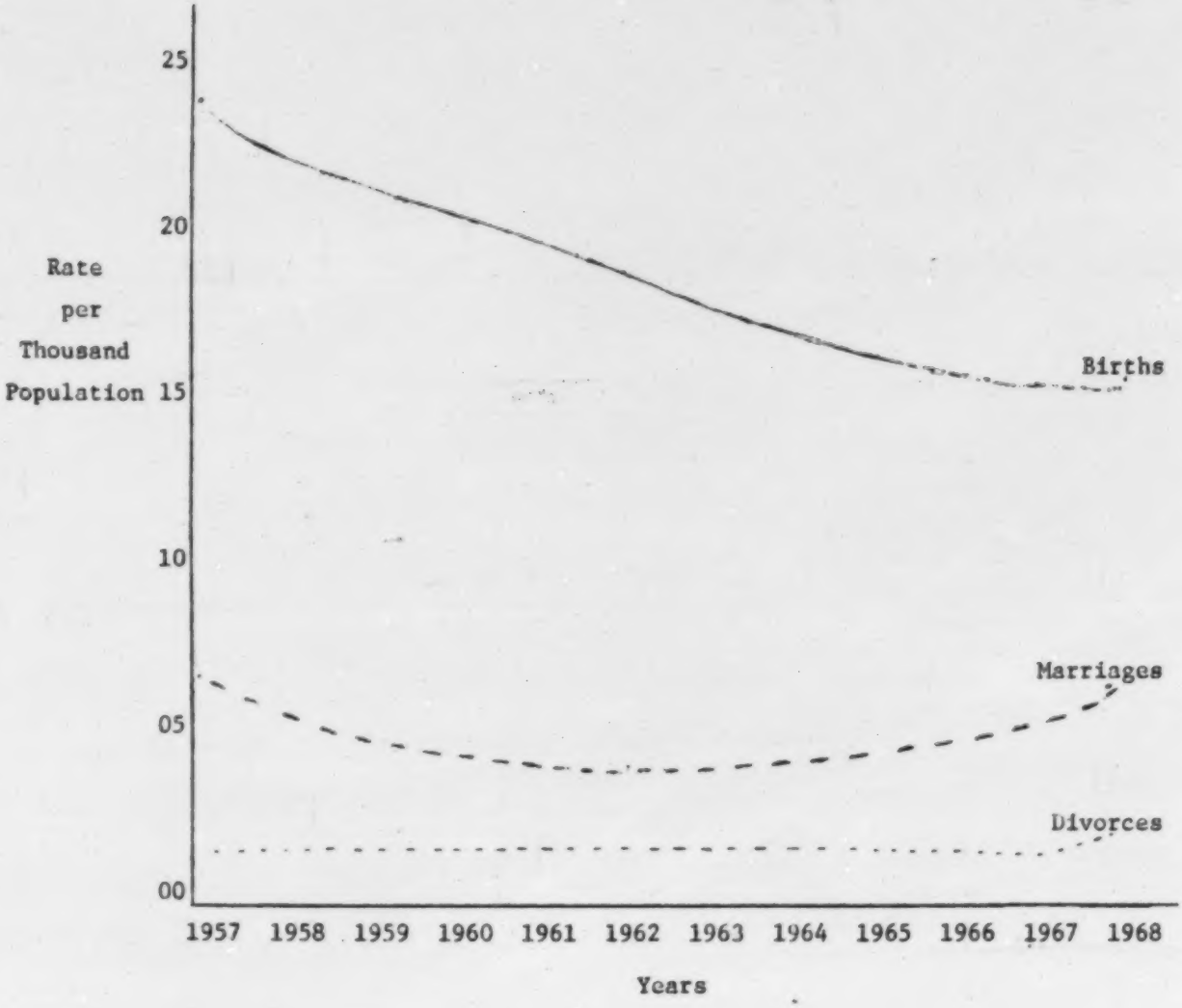
Figure 1A

Birth, Marriage and Divorce Rates
Per 1,000 Population in Pennsylvania 1957-1968*



*1970 Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract, page 30.

Table 1A

Birth Rate by Turnpike District County (1957-68)

County	1967	1968	County	1967	1968
Bedford	16.7	16.8	Fulton	18.1	15.8
Blair	14.8	14.8	Huntingdon	15.3	16.4
Cambria	15.2	14.1	Somerset	14.8	13.5

The predicted numbers of children 0-4 years of age in the six counties are given in Table 2A. Bedford and Huntingdon could be expected to have an increase in the number of children 0-4 years of age between the years 1970-1980. Blair County would be expected to remain about the same. Fulton and Somerset would be expected to decrease somewhat. Cambria would be expected to decrease significantly.

Table 2A

Predictions of the Number of Children Age 0-4 Years by County in Thousands*[1]

	1970	1980
Bedford	4.4	4.6
Blair	14.4	14.4
Cambria	19.2	17.1
Fulton	1.2	0.9
Huntingdon	4.2	4.5
Somerset	8.0	7.9

[1] All figures are estimates extrapolated from the 1970 Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract. 1980 estimates reflect projections with adjustments made on the basis of the 1967-1968 trend in birth rates.

Question 2. What is the trend in the number of working mothers in the particular community?

Only limited census information relating to this question could be uncovered. Table 3A indicates the percentage of women of childbearing age in the work force by county. Additional information must be sought if the trends in these figures are to be uncovered. Within the surveyed group a total of 27 per cent of mothers reported having been employed within the last year. The percentage ranged from 40 per cent in Altoona to 20 per cent in Cambria County.

Table 3A

Percent of Women of Childbearing Age (18-44) in the Work Force and Their Probable Number of Children (1980)*1

County	Percent of Women of Childbearing Age in Work Force*2	Number of Children*3
Bedford	.33	1,518
Blair	.38	5,472
Cambria	.42	7,182
Fulton	.37	333
Huntingdon	.36	1,620
Somerset	.35	2,765
	Total	18,890*4

*1 All statistics are drawn from the 1970 Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract.

*2 Calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of women 18-44 in work force}}{(\text{total Co. population}/2)\ (\%\ \text{of population in age range 18-44 years})} = \%\ \text{of women of childbearing age in work force}$$

*3 Percent of women of childbearing age in the work force x number of children in the county between the ages of 0-4 years.

*4 It should be noted that this probably represents an overestimate.

Question 3. What is the trend in the number of children within the age group who have working mothers in the community?

One estimate of the numbers of children with working mothers is provided in Table 3A. The figures in this table represent 1980 estimates of the number of children based upon the assumption of a constant percentage of working mothers. The trend in these figures therefore follows that of the birth rate. That is, the number of children of working mothers needing child care in 1980 is predicted to be less in this region in 1980 than at present.

Question 4. What effect is family planning and birth control information and use having upon the population served by day care?

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, and the youth and relative inexperience of the interviewers used in the survey, it was felt that the question of the use or nonuse of birth control methods could not be asked directly of the survey mothers. Rather, the base questions used for assessment on this issue were: "How do you feel about women who use family planning and birth control," "How do you feel about family planning and birth control for yourself," and "Have you ever received information on the methods of family planning and birth control?" A fourth question was included if the answer to the third one was affirmative: "Was the information used to plan the size of your family?"

It should be noted here that the definition of birth control was left to the interpretation of the interviewee and that no efforts were made to influence or assess that definition.

We had been apprehensive that the interviewers would encounter resistance and perhaps even hostility when they approached this issue, and in

fact these responses did occur a few times. However, only 1 percent of the over 600 mothers surveyed refused to discuss or respond to these questions.

The following presents the results of the four base questions used to gain information concerning family planning and birth control:

Question 4A. How do you feel about women who use family planning and birth control?

Our data indicated two strong responses to this question, both of which suggest a positive attitude toward family planning and birth control. The categories "Should be available for all" and "Is essential for good family life" contained the majority of attitude responses.

Question 4B. How do you feel about family planning and birth control for yourself?

This question, while not directly asking the respondent about her use or nonuse of family planning and birth control methods, did provide an opportunity for the mother to indicate her attitude toward its use. The response most frequently given indicated use of birth control. Approximately 50 percent of the respondents indicated use of birth control procedures of some sort. It should be noted that the 50 percent indication of use has not been arrived at directly; rather, it was volunteered information within the framework of a general question. However, it does tell us that at least 50 percent of our sample mothers use methods and find the subject acceptable for conversation.

Question 4C. Have you ever received information on the methods of family planning and birth control?

When asked if they had ever received information on (but not necessarily used) the methods of family planning and birth control, 61 percent of our survey mothers responded "yes." Significant differences appeared along the variables of residential area and income level. As might be expected, a greater proportion of urban mothers reported having received birth control and family planning information. While differences in educational attainment did not prove to be significantly influential in determining exposure to this information, differences in income levels did. Our data consistently suggested that those mothers in the lower income levels did not have as much awareness of, or access to, the fundamental knowledge of birth control as the more economically advantaged did. It is interesting to note, however, that even at the highest income levels only 74 percent of our mothers reported having received birth control and family planning information.

A significantly large proportion of female household heads reported they had made use of a Family Planning Center. This percentage was influenced by the Altoona sample, which contained both access to a Family Planning Center and a large number of female headed households.

Question 4D. Was the information (about methods of family planning and birth control) used to plan the size of your family?

When we asked if the mothers in our survey had ever received information on the methods of birth control and family planning, a total of 61 percent responded "yes" if they had utilized this information in the

planning of their family size. More than half (63 percent) replied that they had. These responses indicate that less than one-half of all our survey subjects report having actually used some form of birth control and family planning information at some time to control the size of their family.

A majority of the women surveyed stated a belief in the necessity for planning their family's size and indicated a willingness to accept forms of birth control, and yet they did not actually utilize contraceptive methods. This discrepancy between the stated attitudes toward birth control and family planning and the stated behaviors in the use of birth control would suggest that it is essential to evaluate the processes by which individuals obtain this information and the necessary supplies.

It seems that within the district, while the surface acceptability of birth control now extends to most women, there exists a relatively low use of birth control methods for family planning.

It may be that our interview only touched upon the issue of birth control at a relatively superficial level; hence, a general positive response was fairly easily elicited. Once the issue is probed a little more deeply, however, it may be that the reasons for the nonuse of birth control information and supplies is an ingrained resistance born out of either fear or misinformation, or it may be more directly related to the pragmatic factors of cost and accessibility. Regardless of the underlying reasons for nonuse, there was a positive attitude expressed, suggesting perhaps that the variables of education and accessibility would do much to increase the overall use of such controls and hence affect the number of children born to these families in the years to

come. Assessment of the attitudes toward birth control would do well to obtain information on the opinions and directives of husbands. While the resistance of the husband was rarely mentioned as a reason for nonuse among our mothers, it may be a "hidden" reason which needs probing.

Programs presently being planned or implemented throughout the Turnpike District will likely have an increased effect on the dissemination of birth control information and supplies and hence ultimately upon the birth rate. Therefore, the present trends of a decreasing birth rate and a diminishing population of potential day care users are likely to be reinforced by the general acceptance of family planning information and the future availability of information and services.

Question 5. What are the trends of inward and outward migration for the area to be served?

In general, the six counties have shown a stable population over the years. Population increases have been slow in comparison with other areas of the state. However, outward migration of the productive segments of the District's population has been 400 percent higher than the state and national averages (Turnpike District Planning and Development Commission, 1971, p. I-8).

Question 6. What is the general economic status of the community?

The unemployment rate is 55 percent higher than the state and national average. Household incomes are below state and national levels by 20 percent (Turnpike District Planning and Development Commission, 1971, p. I-8).

Per capita income rank for the six counties, from highest to lowest is Cambria, Blair, Huntingdon, Bedford, Somerset, and Fulton.

Ranking from highest to lowest on unemployment rate creates the following order: Bedford, Fulton, Somerset, Cambria, Blair, and Huntingdon.

Question 7. What economic trends may be predicted for the community?

Projections for economic growth for the district suggest that by 1975:

a. People will still be leaving the community or remaining without employment.

b. There will still be a concentration of low growth industries and considerable dependence upon steel and railroading.

c. Extractive industries such as coal, stone, clay, and glass will continue to rank among the District's important sources of manufacturing employment.

d. Some diversification will have begun. (Turnpike District Planning and Development Commission, 1971)

In general, these and other projections suggest a slow growth rate with diversification necessary to provide a greater outlet for female employment.

Summary of Potential-User Estimates. The answers to all of the seven questions posed suggest a stable or decreasing number of potential users of day care services. If day care is construed as a resource primarily for working mothers and primarily for children below school

age, a level of approximately 19,000 children could be expected to be the maximum potential population of users.

Consumer Demand

In general, this area of concern was only partially covered by the survey and by other sources of information. To the knowledge of the writers, there is no general cry for day care services among the broad spectrum of potential users.

Question 3. What attitudes exist with the population of potential users which could affect the utilization of day care services?

Once again the answer to this question can best be given by considering the results of four of the questions presented to the mothers in the survey.

Question 3A. How do you feel about part-time child care?

The question of child care on a part-time basis received a positive response. Sixty-five percent of the mothers were able to perceive the benefits for their children of being with other children and other adults.

Child care to this extent does not challenge the mother's sense of responsibility and maternal role.

While only 21 percent of these sample mothers do in fact use child care services, there does seem to be a positive accepting attitude in the community toward part-time child care.

Question 3B. How do you feel about full-time child care?

Differences occurred between the maternal attitudes toward part-time child care and the maternal attitudes toward full-time child care. In the first instance (part-time care) mothers indicated that they felt both the child and the parent were likely to benefit from such a situation. Few respondents became alarmed at the idea of the child being out of the home on a part-time basis. However, the idea of full-time child care met with substantial resistance. Sixteen percent of the respondents stated there were no circumstances which would make such care acceptable. This resistance seemed to center around the mother's conception of herself and her maternal role, and the mother's concern over the development of her child. Our respondents felt that it was crucial for the child to spend time with the parents in order to be socialized in the ways they chose. They reported concern that full-time care out of the home weakens the parental influence in the areas of attitudes and values.

The mothers who indicated that they felt their child would benefit from full-time care usually suggested that the child would be better off in a more structured, constant environment than in the part-time care and part-time home situation.

Question 3C. Why should children be cared for by others?

When questioned about their attitudes toward leaving children in the care of someone else, most of the respondents gave answers which reflected their ideas about maternal roles and responsibilities. The most obvious examples were mothers who refused to consider any such arrangements because they felt rearing their children was solely their

job. Other responses centered around stress situations such as emergencies and required work. In only a few cases did the mothers' responses indicate an interpretation of child care value to the child himself. These results suggest that mother-role perception is critical to the use or nonuse of child care services.

Most mothers in our study indicated that they would be willing to utilize child services under either of the following two circumstances:

1. The service would be on a part-time basis which would allow the mother to release the child (and her responsibility for him) without challenging her sense of maternal role; it would be preferable if she could perceive that the experience would be profitable and beneficial for the child;
2. The child care service would be required due to some emergency in the home to which the mother must turn her attention.

Either of these two situations would allow the mother to retain her values about the role of a mother and yet utilize available services.

Question 3D. Have you either tried or thought about seeking a job?

This question was asked of women who had not been employed during the previous year.

In the majority of cases where women did not work, the mothers indicated that they did not wish to work. A very small number of women indicated that they had sought employment, but that the lack of adequate child care arrangements for their children, the lack of profitable, desirable jobs, and/or the lack of skill or training had prevented their

carrying through.

The idea that many women would seek employment outside the home should child care be provided was not supported by our data. The women appeared content to remain at home if their husbands' incomes allow them to do so.

Reasons for this negative attitude toward working outside the home may be derived from several circumstances. The first of these is the obvious importance which these mothers attach to their roles in the home. They reflect a value system which indicates that a woman's true place is in the home caring for her husband and children. To want to leave these areas of concern to join the work world implies to these mothers either economic crisis or dissatisfaction with the "normal" way things should be. An additional critical factor is the types of employment opportunities these mothers would have. Most are qualified only for the less prestigious jobs of the society. It is small wonder that a woman hesitates to break her community norms, violate the needs of her child as she perceives them and, go through an arduous and frequently expensive process to find child care facilities to go out and obtain a job as a waitress or clerk at $1.45 an hour.

Question 4. What attitudes towards early educational experiences are held by the potential users?

Direct information on this question is not available, though the responses to the subquestions of Question 3 suggest that there is a positive attitude towards some supplementary experiences.

When asked what the parents would like to see in a child care program, the most frequently mentioned requirement or characteristic was that of highly qualified personnel. Mothers tended to stress either the teacher role of empathy and understanding or that of disciplinarian. In either case, mothers had definite ideas about the type of person they wanted interacting with their children.

Emphasis on the educational component of a child care service was also indicated by our sample. In most cases, the type of educational element desired was that of school readiness activities. The social aspect of preschool was mentioned by only a quarter of our mothers. It would seem that the traditional concept of preschool programs as places for children to play and interact with one another has been replaced to a certain extent by the increased pressure to start children learning before they reach school age.

Many mothers expressed opinions about the more pragmatic, physical aspects of a child care service. They were concerned over the provision of hot meals, the availability of play areas, the nap-taking procedures, etc.

Summary of Consumer Demand. Although only sketchy information is available, there appears to be no great demand for day care services in the District.

While most of the mothers surveyed indicated a favorable attitude toward child care services, the type of service which they found acceptable was somewhat limited to part-time care. A general concern over the external influence on the child makes women reluctant to release

their children for extended periods of time. Full-time child care is seen as a less than desirable alternative to be used only in cases of emergency. The majority of the women polled did not desire employment. These results suggest that, unless a significant effort is employed to change basic attitudes, utilization of full-time day care services would be restricted to some proportion of those children of presently employed mothers. There seems to be no great desire for such services among other potential users. Therefore, the maximum number of potential users should be reduced. Since 16 percent of the respondents indicated no circumstances would make full-time care acceptable. This figure may be used to reduce the estimate of potential users. Hence, it seems that services should be planned for a maximum of 15,900 users. Additionally, since presently only 21 percent use some child care services this might be construed as a reasonable estimate of initial use, i.e. 3,990 children would constitute a reasonable estimate of demand barring an elaborate consumer education program.

Community Neediness

The neediness of the community may be only partly evaluated by those rather remote from the situation and not very knowledgeable about the community. However, here too, some of the relevant information is available from the survey.

Question 1. Do relevant indicators suggest a generalized need for day care services in the community?

Generally, income levels and formal education levels in the community are lower than state and national levels. Unemployment is high, infant mortality is high, and, in the surveyed group, 14 percent of the mothers were single, divorced, separated or widowed. These indicators suggest the reasonableness of some sort of social intervention plan.

Question 4. What is the present rate of the utilization of formal services?

Twenty-one percent of the surveyed mothers used some form of formal child care service. Two major forms of child care service were predominately used by the sample mothers. The first of these, Head Start, was indicated in 72 percent of the cases. Educational attainment and income level are influential in determining eligibility for this service. Interviewees report enthusiasm and approval for Head Start without exception.

The other type of program mentioned frequently is the day care center. In our sample only in the areas of Johnstown, Somerset, and Bedford are families utilizing this service.

Use of the traditional nursery-school type of program is limited in our sample to the upper levels of education and income.

Once we had determined the number of mothers using child care arrangements, we inquired as to how many more knew of services which they could use if they so desired. Approximately one-fifth stated that, should they want such a situation, they knew where to find one. Again

Head Start and day care centers proved to be the best known, but in this case it was the day care center which was mentioned most frequently.

Question 5. What are the causes of less than 100 percent utilization of existing services?

The one area that was mentioned by the survey was that of transportation. Although 91 percent of our sample mothers indicated that they had at least some access to private vehicle use, more than half stated that they would like to have more transportation facilities made available to them. The most frequently mentioned needs were for additional bus service, both in local areas and to other communities or vital areas, and for an increased variety in the types of transportation available to them. In all of these responses, our data indicate differences according to area. The urban centers were more likely to desire an increase in the frequency and availability of bus service, while the rural areas were more likely to require increased variety in the types of services available to them.

Our data suggest that transportation difficulties did not constitute a major problem for the large majority of our survey mothers. While they do indicate an interest in having more transportation facilities available to them, this need did not have high priority. Only 2 to 3 percent responded that they were entirely without such services.

When assessing the reasons for use of nonuse of other child related services, it appears that transportation was not a critical issue. Mothers who did not utilize local or regional services were not usually hampered by lack of transportation.

Summary of Community Neediness

Insufficient information was available to fully assess the day care needs of the Turnpike District. It does appear, however, that the 6-county region represents a generalized area in need of a social intervention child care program. It is not at all clear that full-day care is the type of program needed. Insufficient information was available for use in judging the potential resources for the delivery of such services and their relationship to other existent services, though it is known that approximately 560 day care slots are available in the area at present.

General Conclusions

The number of potential users in the 6-county region is sufficiently large to sustain a major day care effort. Projections indicate approximately 19,000 potential child recipients of such services. There are some indications however that the number of potential users would dimimish gradually over time unless major social and economic changes occur in the District. There also appear to be both economic and attitudinal factors which suggest a lower actual rate of utilization. Generalized maternal attitudes towards the role of the mother in child rearing, towards full-time day care, and towards employment would inhibit the development of such programs. Additionally, the general economic development prospects suggest both a lack of viable additional outlets for maternal employment (even if desired) and a lack of a financial basis for other than state or federally supported day care services. Maximum demand would appear to be for services for about 16,000 children.

A more realistic estimate would suggest 4,000. A realistic assessment of new service requirements would suggest facilities for 3500 children. The successful filling of these slots would require an extensive attitude change-educational program.

Early education experiences, designed to supplement home experiences on a part-time basis, would likely receive greater support and enthusiastic response. Such services may also meet the generalized needs that appear to exist in the community. It would seem likely then that some combination of part-time and full-time programs, accompanied by auxiliary services, should be planned for the area. In the short term these combined services should be planned for about 3500 children.